

The Farmer and Socialism

There is no class of our people that is so ruthlessly exploited and ruthlessly plundered as the farmer.

None works harder than he, and none gets less returns for his labor and capital. After he has by grinding toil for weary months produced a crop of anything, the gamblers of the commercial world take his product and gamble with it until it finally reaches the hands of the consumer. Standing as they do between him and the consumer, they have it within their power to take all that he produces and leave him just such portion of it as they may think fit.

To the farmer's lot falls all the toil, the expenses, and the losses occasioned by storms, drouths, frosts, blights, birds, animals, insects and numberless other causes, while the railroads, commission men, and the combines of all sorts that prey upon him are guaranteed their profits and charges, whatever happens.

Whether the farmer realizes anything or not from his crop, the railroads and commission men must have their pay in full, and that, too, in cash. By the peculiar arrangement of their business their charges become a first lien upon the farmer's shipments, and it is only after these are fully satisfied that he has anything.

Thus all the risks of glut in the markets, the losses that may arise from rough and reckless handling by the transportation companies, the negligence or dishonesty of the commission men, and, in fact, all risks whatever are thrown upon the farmer, while the profits of the handlers are guaranteed. If the railroads, through careless handling have injured or destroyed the goods the farmer has shipped, or the commission men report the goods as having "arrived in bad order," the farmer is without redress and is thus compelled to shoulder the losses due to their carelessness as well as those heretofore enumerated. It thus happens that the farmer is absolutely at the mercy of these irresponsible and unscrupulous parties whose interests are precisely antagonistic to his own.

It is a well known maxim of the railroads to charge "all the traffic will bear," which, being interpreted into plain English, means simply, "all that can be squeezed out of it." It is charged by Hon. J. L. Cowles in his book, "A General Freight and Passenger Post," upon the authority of a member of one of the railroad traffic associations, that the railroads of this country have over two millions of freight rates for the express purpose of being able to graduate their charges to take "all there is in the business." In this way they can and do so adjust their freight charges so as to take all the results of the farmer's labor and leave him only just whatever they like. The last census shows that what was left by them for the farmers in the year 1900, amounted to an average of only \$650 (gross) per farm. Out of this must be deducted all the farmer's expenses for labor, repairs, fertilizers, interest, insurance, taxes and all other expenses necessitated in running a farm. Taking these out, it is safe to say that what is left will amount to less than the average day laborer's wages.

This sum—not more than \$300 at the outside—represents the year's earnings of the farmer and his entire family, which makes it absolutely paltry as compared even with the day laborer's wages.

Of course, this is an average only; but while some may get more, it is

equally certain that others must get less. If the farmer loses any live stock or has any other misfortune, which, of course, is sure to be the case with many, then the pittance that the railroads leave him is likely to be wiped out altogether.

But this is not all. The trusts and combines, the gamblers on the Boards of Trade and Produce Exchanges and other parasitic robbers, plunder him to their heart's content.

The combines fix the prices and plunder him on everything he buys, and the gamblers on "Change" and elsewhere fix the prices on everything he sells, and between them they play "ducks and drakes" with his property at their sweet wills, and he may be certain that their "sweet wills" are always to his detriment and to their own benefit.

In fact, statistics show that while products of the farms of the United States amount to less than four billions of dollars, the cost to the consumers was over ten billions of dollars, so that the railroads and middlemen gobbled up in a few days over six billions of dollars for transporting and selling the four billions of dollars worth of farm products that the farmers of the country had spent months in producing.

Now, here is another paralyzing fact for the American farmer to meditate upon. The total capital invested in manufactures in the United States is less than ten billions of dollars, while the amount invested in farm property is more than double that sum, or about twenty and one-half billions of dollars.

The gross products of the manufacturing were over thirteen billion dollars in the year 1900, while the gross returns realized by the farmers of the United States were valued at only \$3,764,000,000. Now, mark this: After taking out all expenses the net profits from the ten billions of manufacturing capital were \$1,918,000,000, or more than half the whole gross returns from all the farms in the country with more than twice the capital invested. As to the net returns from the twenty and one-half billions invested in farm property, if we take out a reasonable sum for wages of the farmers themselves, it is safe to say that not one cent of profit is realized by the farmers as a whole on this enormous investment.

The more we analyze and compare this matter the more astounding it appears. The amount invested in farming is nearly equal to the combined capitalization of all the railroads and manufacturing industries in the United States. But while the capitalization of the railroads and manufacturing is more than half wind and water, and represents nothing whatever but their power through monopoly to compel the farmers and consumers to pay a profit on this bogus capital, the farming capital represents solid, tangible property for every dollar set down. So it happens that the actual investment in farming is fully double the actual investment in both the railroads and manufacturing.

The amount set down as farm property is an actual inventory taken by the sworn officers of the United States government who have no inducement whatever to falsify, while the actual capital invested in the railroads and manufacturing is kept so secret that it is impossible to do more than make an estimate of it.

It is not denied, however, that more than half of their capitalization is water, and as I have said, this represents nothing under heaven but their power to compel the peo-

ple to pay dividends upon it.

Now, while this enormous investment made by the farmers is an actual investment and yet does not bring them as a whole one cent of income, the railroad and manufacturing capital is expected to pay two profits, one on their bonds and another on their stocks. These stocks, which, in the case of the railroads, according to good authority, never cost the original investors ten cents on the dollar, serve the purpose first, of holding the titles to the properties; second, to draw dividends on; and third, to gamble with and unsettle the rest of the business of the country to the loss of everyone but the gamblers.

I think these facts are the most appalling that I have ever dug up. Nothing within the whole range of facts concerning the condition of the American farmers equals them.

Here we have the very institutions that are chiefly instrumental in the impoverishment of the farmer reaping two profits on both their genuine and bogus capitalization, while they have robbed him of every particle of profit from his enormous investment.

Now, what do you think of it, Mr. Farmer of America?

Is it not an appalling state of facts? Does it not show that we, (I am a farmer myself), are reduced to a complete state of slavery? from which we cannot hope to escape under the present system? Does it not show that our ownership of our farms is only a nominal ownership, and that the real owners are the railroads and combines? We hold title deeds, to be sure, but we are only tenants of the railroads for all that.

If railroad stock, or any other, did not produce a profit it would be valueless for any purpose but to hold the nominal title to property with. Its value depends wholly upon the profits that can be realized from it as an investment. It is the same with farms and other investments. The railroads can and do fix the amounts of our incomes, not only from our investment, but from our labor as well, and so can make our farms valueless at will, and they have done so already as I have shown.

It's a mighty cunning scheme on their part to leave the nominal ownership of our farms in our hands. It saves them the necessity of mak-

ing an enormous investment, while they can at the same time reap all the profits arising from such investment. They also know that a man will work harder and take better care of the property if he has his money invested in it and is allowed to imagine that he is the real owner, than he would if he knew that he was a mere tenant on the property. They also know that they can dispossess him at any time they see fit by turning the screws on him until he has to let his farm go for taxes, or if he becomes desperate enough to mortgage it with the hope of saving it, to compel him to submit to foreclosure under the mortgage. The farmer is so completely in their power under the present system that they can do whatsoever they wish with him and his property.

(Continued next week.)

It is reported that a meeting was recently held in Red Lodge by workmen to create enthusiasm in the Miners union. This is a new one to the writer—attempting to run a union on enthusiasm. It has always been supposed that unions were run upon a unity of brotherhood forced by economic conditions but possibly they are to be run on enthusiasm after an election, and just before on booze and smokers.

A dispatch says that Commissioner of Corporations James R. Garfield, acting under authority of the law creating the bureau of incorporations, has ordered an investigation into the affairs of the Standard Oil company. It is hardly possible, however, that the head of the oil octopus is losing any sleep as to the serious effect of the investigation. It is another bluff to calm the people who are looking for old party dope.

On December 1st, the appellate division of the supreme court of New York in a decision declared the "closed shop" illegal. This sustains Roosevelt on his "open shop" scab policy.

Owen Burns, of Butte, who confessed in court to voting a "marked" ballot, has set an example that might be followed by others; i. e., those who were implicated in the same criminal work, only at the process of buying votes instead of selling them.

An editorial in an exchange says that the New Orleans women have solved the problem of retaining their cooks in service. It is by furnishing the cooks matinee theatre tickets. Pretty good however, even though slight, it shows that capitalism must concede more and more to the wage slave to keep him slaving. After awhile he will awake, and then matinee tickets and other delusions will not go. He will demand the full product of his toil.

A female inmate of a Minnesota insane asylum has won a prize offered by a Boston magazine for the correct solution of a rebus and a short essay on the topic. The prize was \$250 or a trip abroad, and the woman has asked the state board in control of the asylum to allow her to take the trip. The case is a peculiar one, and the authorities are in doubt what to do.—Helena Independent.

A laborer is one who does anything for the benefit of society, whether by brain or brawn. When we speak of a laborer always bear in mind that a farmer is as much a laboring man as is the fellow who works for wages in the mill, mine or smelter, and that the professor in the educational line is also a laborer.

James Derham has opened an office at No. 10 Edwards St., where he can be found for the sale of Wyoming lump coal and Black Diamond coal. "Jimmie" is known to have the right goods and will deliver them as he agrees. Union Coal Co., James Derham, Mgr., office No. 10 Edwards St. Tel. 149.

Parry's Paper vs. Socialism

Following is the text of a circular letter that has been sent to the secretaries of the Socialist locals throughout the country. It sounds the first slogan of the campaign that the employers' association and citizens alliance are going to wage from now on against the Socialist movement.

Mr. Parry wants every Socialist to subscribe for his paper in order that they may see the other side of the Socialist question. But he presents the "other side" in such a poor manner that a Socialist can get very little information or satisfaction out of reading it. It is filled with the familiar "down with organized lawlessness" rot, and tirades against what he imagines is Socialism.

To give our readers an idea of the character of the publication, we reproduce below the letter a few paragraphs from its pages.

Indianapolis, Ind., Nov. 29, '04.
Dear Sir:

As secretary of your Socialist local, we take pleasure in sending you herewith copies of the first two issues of the Industrial Independent, containing the initial installments of D. M. Parry's story, "The Scarlet Empire." Those who are interested in socialism by all means should read this story. Mr. Parry is a thorough believer in full public discussion of all important economic questions. He holds that if Socialism is right, then no harm can come to it from a thorough examination into the arguments for and against it; if it is wrong, that one certainly does not want to put his faith in it, since in the end we are all American citizens and desire to do that which is best for the country and humanity.

The Industrial Independent will also contain much other matter that will certainly interest you. Frankly the paper will be a staunch defender of the individualistic form of government. We are contemplating for the near future in the columns of the paper a high-class debate on socialism, between Mr. Parry and one of the leading Socialist exponents of the country. As Socialists may wish to be informed as to this debate in which they certainly will be interested, we ask that you bring this matter up before your Socialist local. All Socialists should be subscribers and readers of the Industrial Independent.

In order to reach the Socialists we make the following subscription offer: For single subscribers, 50 cents a year; five subscriptions, \$1.50, or 30 cents each; ten or more subscriptions, 25 cents for each subscription.

We propose to be perfectly fair in the discussion of public questions but at the same time earnest and aggressive in setting forth our intellectual convictions. The Socialists claim that their position is invulnerable, but we believe that there is another side to the story, and therefore we think that the Industrial Independent will be valuable to Socialist students.

In order that your local Socialists may have the benefit of receiving the paper from its first issue, it will be necessary to get in subscriptions at once, as the October and November issues are almost exhausted. First subscriptions will be first served.

Earnestly urging you to bring this matter up at the first meeting of your local, and trusting that we may hear from you promptly, we are,
Sincerely yours, The Industrial Independent Publishing Co.
N. B. Kindly see to it that the names and house addresses of all

subscribers are plainly written out. Make all remittances payable to Industrial Independent Publishing Co. Stamps accepted.

To say how long a man shall work and how much he shall do is a principle of Socialism pure and unde-filed.

Banish the spirit of hostility and hate from your heart. It is hurting yourself most. It limits your capacity to think about your work or business. It exhausts your nervous energy. Don't hate anybody. It isn't Christian and it doesn't pay.

The employe can work for himself best by working for the success of the particular shop or factory in which he is employed. If, through his efforts, the productive capacity of the shop is made larger the employer can afford to pay him higher wages.

"The present-day worker thinks he is free because no one owner sells him to another. He is compelled to sell himself to the capitalist class for the opportunity to live. St. Louis Labor."

If you mean by this that every man has to work for a living, we agree with you.

"The struggle is now between the capitalist class and the working class.—Platform of the Socialist party of Missouri."

How much must a man have to be a capitalist? How little must he have to be of the working class? Let any one of our readers try to draw a line between the "capitalist class" and the "working class" and see how easy it is to do.

The army and militia of the United States, which, some foolish labor leaders have it, are mere institutions of the capitalists to hold the workingman in subjection, belong as much to the wage earner as to the capitalist. That is to say, the army of the United States belongs to neither; it belongs to the government that protects them both.

Restrict the output and you increase the cost of output. Increase the cost of output and you lessen the demand. Lessen the demand and you limit the opportunity for labor.

Good Suggestions on Organization for State.

Livingston, Mont., Dec. 3, 1904.
To the Locals of Montana.

Comrades: The results of the election just past are very gratifying to us. We have made a gain of at least 100 per cent over our vote of two years ago. The democratic party is utterly routed and if we attend to business they never will have the opportunity to rally again in Montana.

The republican party, intoxicated with victory, will become careless and arrogant, giving us greater advantages of attack. To be equal to the opportunities we must thoroughly organize our party in every county and precinct in the state. The past campaign saw us with tickets nominated in fourteen counties, an increase of five over two years ago, and organizations in eighteen counties. We polled about the same percentages in all counties in which we had tickets nominated, with the exception of Yellowstone, in which we made no gain over our

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AWAKE YE WORKERS!

Awake! awake! ye sleeping millions,
Brush the cobwebs from your brain,
Break the chains by which you're anchored
And be like men again.
Why beg and cringe like cringing cowards
What you should like men demand:
Why not use your heads a little,
Why not rest your weary hands?
Our fathers fought and bled for freedom,
'And wrenched it from the tyrant's hand;
Shall we see it taken from us,
And like cowards humbly stand?
Shall we, who by our toil produce
All things, both great and small,
Submit to see the parasite
Reach out and take it all?
Or shall we, like our fathers did,
Smite the oppressor's hand,
And by our united efforts
Drive him from the land.
Shall we stand to see our children
Toil in factory, mine and mill;
While the useless parasites
Do no useful labor still?
Are those who are possessed of riches
Made of better, finer clay
Than they who do the useful labor,
And toil for bread from day to day?
Were some put here to slave for others
While they in lordly mansions dwell?
Don't you think to change the system,
And make them work, would be as well?
The money grasps of this nation
Have no respect for young or old;
In fact, throughout the whole creation,
Gold is God and God is Gold.
Shall we help to drive our daughters
Into lives of sin and shame;
Or shall we by our future actions
Break up this sin-Godly game?
Are we really the descendants
Of that brave and dauntless band
Who for years of deadly struggle
Fought to save this bounteous land?
Or are we just a set of grafts,
And fools, and knaves, and such as that?
The thought would almost cause one laughter,
For that is what the most are at.
But hark! I think I hear the rumbles;
Yes, I hear the distant roar
Of the millions who are moving
As they never moved before.
Awake! awake! ye Rip Van Winkles,
Take a brick and pound your head;
Stick a pin into your carcass,
And see if you're alive or dead.

JOHN BRACK.